

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 JERUSA 02104 021838Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /026 W
-----055365 021842Z /45

Z O 021936Z AUG 78
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 1440
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT FLASH
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T JERUSALEM 2104

EXDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR LEWIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, MARR, UNSC, IS, LE, XF
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON

REF: (A) DRAPER-BLACKWILL TELCON, (B) BEIRUT 4402, (C) STATE
194462

1. AS I HAD ASKED, ROY ATHERTON RAISED ISSUE OF SOUTH LEBANON
IN HIS MEETING THIS AFTERNOON WITH BEGIN TO DISCUSS ATHERTON'S
TALKS IN CAIRO. HE SAID THAT HE WAS CONCERNED THAT RISING
TENSIONS IN LEBANON WOULD POISON THE BROADER ATMOSPHERE IN
WHICH WE WERE TRYING TO GET PEACE NEGOTIATIONS BACK ON THE
TRACK. IF THE MATTER OF SOUTH LEBANON SHOULD END UP IN THE
SECURITY COUNCIL, ATHERTON CONTINUED, NO ONE COULD CONTROL
WHAT WOULD BE SAID. SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD HARDLY CON-
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 JERUSA 02104 021838Z

TRIBUTE TO THE SECRETARY'S VISIT HERE AND COULD SET US BACK
IN OUR EFFORTS TO MOVE THE PEACE PROCESS FORWARD. THUS,
THE CENTRAL OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE TO GET THE LAF INTO TIBNIN.
IF THAT EFFORT DID NOT SUCCEED, ATHERTON SAID, MAY IN THE
WORLD WOULD BELIEVE THAT ISRAEL SHARED THE RESPONSIBILITY
AND THAT IN TURN WOULD FEED BACK NEGATIVELY ON THE BROADER
PICTURE. THUS, ATHERTON HOPED A WAY COULD BE FOUND TO

GET OUT OF THE PRESENT DIFFICULTY.

2. BEGIN RESPONDED THAT HE WANTED TO MAKE TWO POINTS. THERE HAD BEEN NO IDF SHELLING IN SOUTH LEBANON AND HE HOPED SOMEONE WOULD TELL THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT TO STOP SPREADING SUCH RUMORS. ON THE QUESTION OF HADDAD, BEGIN SAID THAT OF COURSE ISRAEL HAD SOME INFLUENCE WITH THE MAJOR. BUT IT COULD NOT ORDER HIM AROUND. THE CHRISTIANS DO THINGS ON THEIR OWN IN SOUTH LEBANON. THAT IS A HARSH FACT, BEGIN SAID, BUT IS A FACT NONE THE LESS.

3. AT THAT POINT, IN TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO WEIGH IN WITH THE ASSEMBLED GROUP WHICH INCLUDED WEIZMAN, DAYAN, YADIN, EVRON AND DINITZ'. I SAID IN THE STRONGEST WAY I KNEW HOW THAT HADDAD'S SHELLING HAD TO STOP AND THAT THE LEBANESE BATTALION HAD TO EXPEDITIOUSLY GET TO TIBNIN. I TOLD THEM THAT WEIZMAN HAD PROPOSED A GOOD SOLUTION TO GET THIS MOVEMENT ACCOMPLISHED. WE HAD URGED THAT SOLUTION ON THE LEBANESE AND THEY ACCEPTED MANY OF ITS ELEMENTS. HOWEVER, THE HADDAD PROBLEM REMAINED. SINCE IT COULD NOT BE SOLVED IMMEDIATELY, IT HAD TO BE PUT ASIDE, AND WE ALL SHOULD CONCENTRATE OUR EFFORTS ON HOW TO BRING 600 TROOPS 35 KILOMETERS AND SOON.

4. WEIZMAN INTERRUPTED TO ADD "WITHOUT LEAVING ANY LEBANESE BEHIND." I SAID THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 JERUSA 02104 021838Z

HAD REPEATEDLY ASSURED US THAT IT NEVER HAD ANY SUCH INTENTION. BEGIN ASKED ME TO CONFIRM THAT WE HAD SUCH ASSURANCES, AND I SAID "ABSOLUTELY."

5. I SAID THAT HADDAD CONTINUED TO SHELL LEBANESE TROOPS IN THE OPEN AND THAT OCCASIONALLY HIT THE UN AREA AS WELL. I TOLD BEGIN THAT I THOUGHT I UNDERSTOOD ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHRISTIANS IN SOUTH LEBANON AND I TOOK SERIOUSLY HIS STATEMENT THAT THE GOI COULD NOT COMPLETELY CONTROL THE CHRISTIANS. BUT I STRESSED THAT OUTSIDE OF JERUSALEM, NOBODY IN THE WORLD BELIEVES THAT. NOT IN WASHINGTON, PARIS, LONDON, NEW YORK, IN ARAB CAPITALS. THEY ALL SHARED THE ASSUMPTION THAT ISRAEL DOES CONTROL HADDAD AND ISRAEL WILL BE BLAMED FOR HIS ACTIONS. IF ANYTHING HAPPENS THAT IS TRAGIC IN SOUTH LEBANON--A SLAUGHTER OF THE LAF, A LAF RETREAT WHICH CAUSES SARKIS TO RESIGN, A CIVIL WAR--THE CAN WILL BE TIED TO ISRAEL'S TAIL. I TOLD BEGIN AND HIS ASSOCIATES I DID NOT WANT TO SEE THAT HAPPEN. IT NEED NOT HAPPEN. THE MOVE OF THE LAF TO TIBNIN COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED. BUT THE SHELLING HAD TO STOP AND NEGOTIATIONS ON THE GROUND HAD TO PROCEED.

6. WEIZMAN RESPONDED THAT ACCORDING TO HIS INFORMATION, THERE HAD BEEN NO SHELLING SINCE 10:00AM THIS MORNING. HE ADDED THAT HE HAD SOME INDICATIONS THAT SOME OF THE SHELLS FALLING ON THE LEBANESE WERE BEING FIRED BY THE FATAH TO THE NORTH OF KAWKABA. I RATHER BLUNTLY DISMISSED THAT DIVERSION AND EMPHASIZED THAT I HAD CONFIDENCE THAT IF WEIZMAN, CHIEF OF STAFF EITAN, AND NORTHERN COMMANDER BEN GAL TOLD HADDAD TO STOP SHOOTING, HE WOULD STOP. I SAID ON THAT IT WAS OUR IMPRESSION THAT GENERAL KHOURY IN BEIRUT WAS SYMPATHETIC TO WEIZMAN'S PROPOSAL AND WAS TRYING TO CONVINCE THE POLITICIANS TO GO ALONG. BUT HE CERTAINLY WAS NOT ASSISTED IN THAT TASK BY CHRISTIAN SHELLS EXPLODING AMONG LAF POSITIONS IN THE SOUTH.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 JERUSA 02104 021838Z

7. WEIZMAN GOT THE PENULTIMATE WORD BY SAING THAT IF THE LAF GOT TO TIBNIN, THE ROUTE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND SUPPLY WOULD HAVE TO BE ACROSS THE AKIYA BRIDGE AND THROUGH NABATIYA. I TOLD HIM THAT WE WOULD FACE THAT PROBLEM WHEN IT AROSE. NOW WE SHOULD ALLL CONCETRATE ON TODAY AND TOMORROW.

8. COMMENT: FROM THEIR REACTION, I BELIEVE THE ISRAELIS GOT OUR MESSAGE. MOST OF THE PRINCIPALS WHO WERE AT THE ATHERTON SESSION, WERE GOING IMMEDIATELY TO A CABINET SECURITY COMMITTEE MEETING TO DISCUSS SOTH LEBANON AND THE SECRETARY'S MESSAGE. I GAVE THEM MORE TO THINK ABOUT. WE SHOULD KNOW LATER THIS EVENING WHAT EFFECT IT HAD. NEWLIN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, NEGOTIATIONS, PEACE TALKS, DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978JERUSA02104
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780316-0614
Format: TEL
From: JERUSALEM
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197808108/aaaadmua.tel
Line Count: 151
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d0108b58-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 BEIRUT 4402
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1564287
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOUTH LEBANON
TAGS: PORG, MARR, IS, LE, XF, UNSC, (ATHERTON, ALFRED L JR), (BEGIN, MENAHEM)
To: STATE BEIRUT
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d0108b58-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014